‘The challenges we face as a species on this planet are daunting’

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Body

It is hard to fathom how some folks cling so desperately to denial as a way to cope with a changing world. How Russ Babcock and others of like mind can easily dismiss the conclusions of so many top climate scientists is incredible.

These scientific conclusions are reflected in the Climate Change Evidence and Causes Report (updated in 2020) published by the Royal Society (UK) and the US National Academy of Sciences. This report concludes that humanity’s generation of greenhouse gases is bringing our planet close to a mean temperature which will have catastrophic, dynamic outcomes that will be beyond our power to control. Most of our global leaders are now finally heeding the vast majority of reputable scientists who have been publishing these warnings for decades.

I understand that their conclusions can be difficult to swallow for some who want to believe that humani-ty has not contributed to climate change. Nonetheless, the answer is not to argue against facts that have been ascertained by scientists whose research and expertise is in our planet’s climates. Babcock might as well be arguing that the earth is flat. He rails against any sacrifices or significant changes that credible climate scientists recommend, saying these efforts would be futile and expensive. Babcock seems to believe that we will be able to weather whatever storms come our way if we just work on preparing our infrastructure for a bit more water, wind and fire. Tell that to the government of Pakistan, a country that just saw thirty percent of its land disappear under flood water.

Naturally, we do need to make those infrastructure improvements but we also need to reduce our contribution to climate change. It is a question of whether it is better to build a fence around the edge of a cliff or to park more ambulances at the base of it. Babcock opts for the increase in ambulances and he calls efforts to build the fence preposterous. The challenges we face as a species on this planet are daunting. The sacrifices we will be asked to make may be uncomfortable. Denying that there is a problem or that we have any responsibility for it is undermining our capacity to do what we need to do while we still can.

Joslyn Sharp, Trail

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